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TELLING NUMBERS

Growth of GST collection, from one fiscal to the next

THE AVERAGE gross GST collection in 2018-19 was Rs 98,114 crore per month, which was higher than the previous year's average of Rs 89,885 crore, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a written reply in Lok Sabha on Monday. The monthly data she presented show a total collection of Rs 11,77,369 in 2018-19, as compared to Rs 7,40,650 from July 2017 (following the introduction of GST) to March 2018. In 2019-20, the total collection in the first three months has been Rs 3,14,093 crore, a monthly average of Rs 1,04,698 crore.



The reply said that until 2018-19, the Centre has released Rs 1,29,355 as GST compensation to the states (including the UTs of Delhi and Puducherry) — Rs 48,178 crore in 2017-18 (July to March) and Rs 8,11,77 in 2018-19. The total GST collection of the states/UTs was Rs 5,18,447 crore in 2018-19, as compared to Rs 2,911,00 crore in 2017-18 (August to March). The government said GST collection of the states/UTs has been showing steady improvement over time. In addition, they are also assured a growth of 14% for a period of five years through payment of compensation.

MONTH-WISE GROSS COLLECTION OF GST

MONTH	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
April	-	1,03,459	1,13,865
May	-	94,016	1,00,289
June	-	95,610	99,939
July	21,572	96,483	-
August	95,633	93,960	-
September	94,064	94,442	-
October	93,333	1,00,710	-
November	83,780	97,637	-
December	84,314	94,726	-
January	89,825	1,02,503	-
February	85,962	97,247	-
March	92,167	1,06,577	-
Total	7,40,650	11,77,369	3,14,093
Average	89,885	98,114	1,04,698

Fugues in Rs crore
Source: Ministry of Finance, Lok Sabha reply

TIP FOR READING LIST

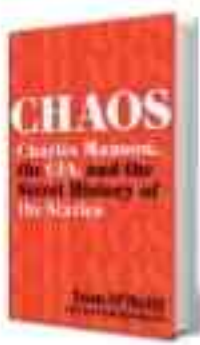
FRESH QUESTIONS ON MANSON MURDERS

ON THE night of August 8, 1969, members of a cult that called itself the “Manson Family” entered a luxury home in Los Angeles and murdered five people including actress Sharon Tate, wife of Roman Polanski and eight months pregnant at the time. The following night, apparently because cult leader Charles Manson was displeased with the sloppy manner in which the murders were committed, the group murdered a couple in another house. In the trial that followed, Charles Manson, Susan Atkins, Patricia Krenwinkel, Leslie van Houten and Tex Watson were sentenced to death — later commuted to life (Manson and Atkins died in jail) — while Linda Kasabian was given immunity for testifying against the others. For motive, much of what is known — or believed — came from the prosecutor, Vincent Bugliosi (now deceased) and his book, *Helter Skelter*. According to this narrative, Manson wanted suspicion of the murder to be pinned on blacks and a racial backlash incited, and he also wanted to terrorise a former resident of the luxury home,

music record producer Terry Melcher (Doris Day's son). Now, a new book raises questions about this account and describes an alleged cover-up including police carelessness and legal misconduct.

Chaos: Charles Manson, the CIA and the Secret History of the Sixties is written by journalist Tom O'Neill, with David Piepenbring. Twenty years ago, O'Neill

was reporting a magazine piece about the murders, and the book is a result of what he found then and in the years that followed. Based on new interviews and documents from the Los Angeles police, the FBI, and the CIA, the book raises a number of new questions. Why did the CIA take months to nab Manson when he had already been connected to an earlier murder? O'Neill alleges Bugliosi struck out references to accounts of Melcher being with Manson after the Sharon Tate murders, and suggests that his objective may have been to protect Hollywood celebrities. “This is a book that overturns our understanding of a pivotal time in American history,” the publisher's note says.



AMITABH SINHA
SRIHARIKOTA, JULY 15

THE LAUNCH of Chandrayaan-2, India's first attempt at landing a spacecraft on the Moon, was aborted less than an hour from liftoff Monday morning after scientists detected a technical glitch in the launch vehicle system. The mission vehicle was a GSLV Mk-III rocket, a relatively new acquisition that is critical to ISRO's future missions.

What makes the new rocket crucial?
ISRO intends to use the rocket, a product of over three decades of research and development, for all future deep space exploration missions, including Gaganyaan, India's first human mission, scheduled to be launched before 2022. The vehicle, which can launch heavier commercial satellites, is also projected to be a big revenue generator for ISRO. However, the mainstay of ISRO's launches over the last three decades has been the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), a rocket that has failed on only two of its 48 launches since the early 1990s. Chandrayaan-1 and Mangalyaan too, were launched by PSLV.

Why wasn't PSLV used for Chandrayaan-2?
PSLV has its limitations. It does not have enough power to carry heavier satellites, or to go deeper into space. PSLV can deliver a payload of about 1750 kg to lower Earth orbits, up to an altitude of 600 km from the Earth's surface. It can go a few hundred kilometres higher in Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO), but only with a reduced payload. Chandrayaan-1 weighed 1380 kg, while Mangalyaan had a liftoff mass of 1337 kg. Many of the common commercial satellites used for remote sensing, broadcasting or navigation are well below 1,500 kg, and need to be put into low Earth orbits. PSLV has proved an ideal vehicle to do this — for both Indian and foreign commercial satellites. However, there are satellites that are much heavier — in the range of 4,000-6,000 kg or more — and need to be put into geostationary orbits that are over 30,000 km from Earth. Rockets that carry such massive satellites need to have substantially more power.

And GSLV rockets have that power?
GSLV (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle) rockets use a different fuel, and have a thrust that is far greater than PSLV's. They can, therefore, carry heavier payloads and travel deeper into space. Chandrayaan-2, for example, had a total mass close to 4,000 kg. Among ISRO's GSLV rockets, GSLV Mk-III is the latest and most powerful. It has had two successful flights so far — it carried and deployed the GSAT-19 communication satellite on June 5, 2017 and then, the GSAT-29 communication satellite on November 14 last year. It had an experimental flight in 2014. GSLV Mk-III is powered by a core liquid engine, has two solid boosters that are used to provide the massive thrust required during liftoff, and a cryogenic engine in the upper stage.

What is a cryogenic engine?
Cryogenics is the science relating to behaviour of materials at very low temperatures. Cryogenic technology is challenging to master, but essential for a rocket like GSLV Mk-III. Among all rocket fuels, hydrogen is known to provide the greatest thrust. But hydrogen in its natural gaseous form is difficult to handle, and therefore, not used in normal engines in rockets like PSLV. Hydrogen can be used in liquid form, but it turns liquid at a very low temperature — nearly 250°C below zero. To burn this fuel, oxygen too, needs to be in liquid form, and that happens at about 90°C below zero. Creating an atmosphere of such low temperatures in the rocket is difficult — it creates problems for other materials.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

GSLV story: A rocket's science

In aborting Chandrayaan-2 launch, ISRO has cited a snag in launch vehicle GSLV Mk-III. How is this rocket different from the tried & tested PSLV, and what challenges has ISRO faced in developing it indigenously?

Fleet of launchers

Launchers or Launch Vehicles carry spacecraft into space. PSLV and GSLV are India's two operational launchers. SLV-3 was launched thrice in the early 1980s; four ASLV launches followed between 1987 and 1994. The winged Reusable Launch Vehicle Technology Demonstrator (RLV-TD), which combines the complexity of launch vehicles and aircraft, and the Scramjet Engine-TD are under development.



GSLV Mk-III on the Sriharikota launch pad

PSLV was developed for Low Earth Orbit satellites into Polar and Sun Synchronous Orbits, and GSLV for heavier INSAT class of Geosynchronous satellites into orbit.

	SLV-3	ASLV	PSLV-XL	GSLV MK-II	GSLV MK-III
Height	22.7 m	23.5 m	44 m	49 m	43.43 m
Liftoff weight	17 t	39 t	320 t	414 t	640 t
Propulsion	All solid	All solid	Solid and liquid	Solid, liquid, and cryogenic	Solid, liquid, and cryogenic
Payload mass	40 kg	150 kg	1860 kg	2200 kg	4000 kg
Orbit	Low Earth Orbit	Low Earth Orbit	475 km Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit*	Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit	Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit
*1300 kg in Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit					
All information and images: ISRO					

When and how did India advance in such technology?

The development of the GSLV Mk-III is the story of three decades of hard work on cryogenic technology. The technology was denied to India by the United States in the early 1990s, forcing it to go for indigenisation. ISRO had planned the development of a cryogenic engine back in the mid-1980s, when just a handful of countries — the US, erstwhile USSR, France and Japan — had this technology. To fast-track the development of next-generation launch vehicles — the GSLV programme had already been envisioned — ISRO decided to import a few of these engines. It held discussions with Japan, the US, and France before settling for Russian engines. In 1991, ISRO and the Russian space agency, Glavkosmos, signed an agreement for the supply of two of these engines along with transfer of technology, so that Indian scientists could build these in the future. However, the US, which had lost out on the engine contract, objected to the Russian sale, citing provisions of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), of which neither India nor Russia was a member. MTCR seeks to control the proliferation of missile technology. Russia, still recovering from the collapse of the USSR, succumbed to US pressure and cancelled the deal in 1993. In an alternative arrangement, Russia was al-

lowed to sell seven, instead of the original two, cryogenic engines, but it could not transfer the technology to India. These Russian engines were used in the initial flights of the first and second generation GSLVs (Mk-I and Mk-II). The last of these was used in the launch of INSAT-4CR in September 2007. After the original Russia deal was cancelled, ISRO got down to developing its own cryogenic technology at the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre in Thiruvananthapuram. It took more than a decade to build the engines. In 2010, two launches of second generation GSLV rockets, one with a Russian engine and the other developed indigenously, ended in failures. The big success came in December 2014, with the experimental flight of third generation (Mk-III) GSLV, containing an indigenous cryogenic engine. This mission also carried an experimental re-entry payload that ejected after reaching a height of 126 km, and landed safely in the Bay of Bengal. Two more successful launches of GSLV Mk-III followed. Chandrayaan-2 was its biggest and most keenly-awaited launch.

So, what went wrong?
ISRO has not yet provided the nature or details of the technical glitch in the rocket. The glitch was observed after every major operation had been completed. One of the

last tasks before the launch is the loading of the cryogenic fuel, hydrogen and oxygen. This was completed about a half hour before the countdown was stopped Monday morning. An assessment of the seriousness of the problem could take several days. **How big a setback is this?**
The immediate impact is on the schedule of Chandrayaan-2. ISRO had said that the current window of opportunity to launch Chandrayaan-2 was available only between July 9 and 16. That opportunity now appears to have been lost. This could potentially delay the mission by several months. ISRO has not said when the next window of opportunity will open. Until ISRO makes public its assessment of the problem, it is not possible to predict the impact on future missions, notably Gaganyaan, which has a tight deadline. However, space launch failures are not unusual. Lunar missions, particularly, have had high failure rate. As many as 52 per cent of all lunar missions have been unsuccessful, the most recent being the case of the Israeli Beresheet Lander, which developed problems after entering the lunar orbit and crash landed on the Moon's surface. Technically, Chandrayaan-2 has not failed. The mission was aborted before being launched after a problem was detected.

5G rollout: how far has India progressed, and where does it stand on Huawei?

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, JULY 15

WHILE TAKING charge as the telecom minister last month, Ravi Shankar Prasad had said that India would conduct field trials for 5G telephony in the first 100 days of the new government. One question that has been asked is whether Chinese equipment manufacturer Huawei will be able to participate in the trials. Huawei was black-listed by the US government for American companies to do business with after it was alleged that the company shared data with the Chinese government through the backdoor. **Why did US blacklist Huawei?**
According to *The Wall Street Journal*, “Huawei is the world's largest maker of telecommunications equipment and the No. 2 vendor of smartphones, ahead of Apple Inc. and behind only Samsung Electronics Co”. However, notwithstanding

its dominance, the US has effectively banned Huawei from selling its products after a 2012 congressional report stated that Huawei could be a security risk. According to the US, Huawei's owners have close links with the Chinese military and, as such, the company cannot be trusted with data. The treatment of Huawei has become a massive reason for further straining the already fraught diplomatic relations between the US and China. **Where does India stand on the Huawei controversy?**
Following Huawei's blacklisting by the US administration, several countries were asked to take a stand on whether or not to allow the company to operate. Certain countries such as the UK did not follow the US and cited benefits to operators from Huawei's cost-efficient technology as the reason behind not banning the firm. While India is yet to take a stand on whether or not to allow Huawei in 5G trials, officials at the telecom department

have indicated that a decision will be taken in consultation with the ministries of home affairs and external affairs. Huawei, however, has said that it is ready to sign a “no-backdoor” agreement with the Indian government and telecom companies to ensure that no snooping is allowed on its network. **Where does India stand on the rollout of 5G vis-a-vis other countries?**
Deliberations are still on whether to give spectrum for 5G in the 25 GHz and 28 GHz bands. This is one of the factors causing a delay in the auction of airwaves necessary for 5G deployment. Industry players have deemed availability of spectrum as the prerequisite for the commercial rollout of 5G. In February last year, Airtel and Huawei conducted a lab trial for 5G during which a user throughput of 3 Gbps was achieved. However, not much has moved since then. A committee of the telecom ministry recently cleared the proposal to allow Bharti



Airtel, Vodafone Idea and Reliance Jio to conduct 5G spectrum trial from next month onwards for a period of three months. For these trials, equipment vendors — Samsung, Nokia and Ericsson — have been selected. Despite assertions from the government that India “cannot afford to miss” the 5G bus — indicating that the country will see rollout of the latest generation of

mobile telephony along with the world — none of the Indian telecom companies figures in the list (put out by mobile and broadband network intelligence firm Ookla) of 303 5G deployments by 20 operators in 294 locations across the globe. Additionally, the debt-ridden telecom industry of the country has indicated apprehension towards even bidding for 5G airwaves given their weak financial situation. **What happens after field trials are conducted?**
Field trials allow operators and equipment makers to prove that the network they have built in a laboratory also works outside in a field. Even after conducting the field trials, operators will have a long way to go before commercial rollout primarily because of the lack of availability of the necessary spectrum. Some telecom companies, however, have questioned the need for rolling out 5G in India given that focus is still on the propagation of 4G services, especially in the hinterlands of the country.





The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

Government must step up plans for asset recycling and monetisation for much-needed boost to investment

AN INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE of the central government is set to recommend a second list of public sector assets that could be monetised to raise resources which could then be ploughed back into fresh investments. Reportedly, the proposal entails leasing out public sector assets such as gas pipelines of GAIL, mobile towers of public telecom operators like BSNL and MTNL, and ATMs of state-owned banks to private sector players. Ownership of these assets, though, would continue to vest with the PSUs/government. Earlier, the first list of assets approved by the inter-ministerial committee included 12 sports stadiums, NTPC's Badarpur plant, ITDC's Ashoka hotel, among others. Coming at a time when private sector investments remain subdued, the move to monetise and recycle public sector assets is welcome. Fresh public investments could gradually help crowd-in private investments.

Over the past few years, despite several initiatives of the government, private sector investments have remained sluggish. As a result, the burden of driving investments has fallen on the public sector. But with limited fiscal space, the ability of the general government (Centre and states) to boost investments is severely limited. In such circumstances, asset recycling and monetisation is an innovative way for the public sector to raise resources. At its core, the idea essentially involves giving funds back to the company by leasing an asset, brown-field projects where the process will be easier, to private players for a long term. The transactions could be structured in various ways - large upfront payments, with small or no annual payments, or a small upfront payment, and regular annual payments. This, it is hoped, would be lapped up by pension and sovereign funds who are looking for a fixed income stream with limited execution risk. The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) has been particularly successful in raising resources through this approach. It has recently raised Rs 9,400 crore by transferring operation of assets to private entities for a specified time period. Such a mechanism allows PSUs to raise money for fresh investment without being dependent on budgetary support or borrowings. Revenue raised through this route, which should be ring-fenced lest it is squandered away, can be then ploughed back into roads, ports, airports, etc. At the current juncture, this would compensate for the inability of the private sector to fund infrastructure.

In her maiden budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had reiterated the government's intention to invest Rs 100 lakh crore in infrastructure over the next five years. Central to achieving this is revival of the private investment cycle. But an over-leveraged private sector, at the current juncture, is unlikely to ramp up investments in the short term, leaving the burden on the public sector. An increase in public sector investments could over time help revive the moribund investment cycle. This list of assets must be followed up by a more ambitious, structured programme that seeks to monetise land and other assets of the public sector.

NOT SO FINE

Penalty against Facebook is only a crowd-pleaser, leaving directors who pushed dodgy data deals untouched

FOLLOWING AN INVESTIGATION that was sparked off by the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Facebook has been fined \$5 billion by the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC) for playing fast and loose with its users and their data. The figure is unprecedented in the US and is just under the \$5.1 billion fine that Google was slapped with in Europe — the world's least forgiving jurisdiction on privacy — for illegally leveraging its dominance with Android. The social media giant was found to have breached the conditions of a 2011 settlement and an adverse outcome was seen to be inevitable months ago. It only remained to discuss the quantum of punishment, and with an eye-popping figure, the US government is showing its commitment to reining in Big Digital. But the question remains: Is a fine a suitable deterrent for a behemoth that earned \$56 billion last year, or is it just eye candy for the public, which makes a point but does not cramp its style? It is particularly thought-provoking in the case of Facebook, which has attracted charges of a far more serious nature than its peers in Silicon Valley.

Facebook drew the censorious attention of the FTC with the illegal release of data to Cambridge Analytica, which used it for political profiling of users, and may have influenced the US election which brought Donald Trump to the White House. What is the cost of a stolen election in the world's most powerful democracy? What, for instance, is the global cost of the ongoing Iran crisis, which may not have developed in the hands of another government? That's just one of the entries in an extensive bill, whose total would be mind-boggling. Could a fine be proportional, at all? And would it deter the perpetrators?

The short answer is: No. Corporate malfeasance is executed by foot-soldiers, but originates in policy that is suggested or mandated by the top leadership, whose salary, bonuses or severance packages may not be affected. In fact, if a fine is regarded as a part of the cost of revenue, it is easily ignored, and adjusted against any routine head, like the wages of the said foot-soldiers. In law, the corporation is a person, but its actions are actuated by directors. To be effective, deterrence must fix blame where it belongs, in the upper echelons of the corporate superstructure. The strategy of fining digital giants will remain inadequate until personal liability is considered.

NO THIRD WHEEL

As he ground out a victory over Wimbledon's darling, Djokovic asserted his rightful place in the tennis trinity

ON THE OTHER side of London, two men took a match into tennis' own "super over". For the first time, a five-set singles Wimbledon match would be decided by a tie-breaker, and after four hours and 57 minutes, Novak Djokovic prevailed over the crowd favourite, Roger Federer, in what was the tournament's longest ever final. This was Djokovic's fifth Wimbledon title and a whopping 16th overall. When the two men, nay, champions, finally left Centre Court on Sunday, they shared a total of 36 Grand Slam titles between them. Throw in what Rafael Nadal has won, 18, and you have 54 majors shared between three players. It just goes to show the greatness of the three in this era of swelling records.

Way back in 1967, a veteran Australian, Roy Emerson, had set an all-time record of most Grand Slam titles, 12. Pete Sampras broke that mark 33 years later at Wimbledon 2000, and then Federer surpassed the American's tally by winning his 15th at Wimbledon nine years later. The Swiss has now set the bar at 20, but at just a few weeks short of turning 38, the unspoken fear for any Federer fan is how many more can he manage. In the greater scheme of things, there are two front-runners who might cross Federer's mark, but Djokovic, 32, is the one in the best position to eventually hold the record.

A defensive genius, the Serbian has an all-court game and has been winning titles consistently on hard and grass courts. His closest competitor, Nadal, meanwhile is untouchable on clay, but that constitutes just one major in a year — Nadal is also a year older, and crucially, injury-prone. Yet Djokovic remains the third wheel in the Federer-Nadal fandom split. Boris Becker, the Serb's former coach, asserted during commentary that Djokovic used to feel "unloved". On Sunday, he ground out a victory over Wimbledon's darling. And won over a few fans of his own.



SANDEEP DWIVEDI

BOOKS WILL BE commissioned, movies made, web series scripted and even Broadway might show interest. The story of cricket's most nerve-wracking game ever, the 2019 World Cup final, is destined to live forever. Beyond the Super Over drama, the Ben Stokes "Hand of God" moment; Lord's on Sunday had a field full of men with back stories hand-crafted for a *Reader's Digest* collector's edition.

They reminded the world how sport enhances life, redefines set parameters and re-confirms the power of self-belief. The men on the turf with medals around their necks showcased the human capacity to move on from deeply disturbing trauma and rationalise setbacks as stepping stones on the way to dizzy heights.

Back in 2014, during India's tour of England, I witnessed the early chapters of one of the many feel-good tales. It was on the first day of the Nottingham Test that I had met this pleasant elderly couple from Yorkshire. They were the Plunketts, who were in the stands to watch their son Liam, England's trusted all-rounder.

A day before, I had seen the three together after the Test-eve training session. They had looked every bit a caring, close-knit family. The father, tall but frail, lovingly brushed off the dirt from Liam's shirt. The mother, a silver-haired lady, pulled out cream from her handbag and spread on her son's sun-baked lips. The square-jawed 6 ft 3 inches broad-shoulder hunk, like most men with those physical attributes, wasn't embarrassed by the parental attention. He merely smiled. Liam knew what the moment meant to his parents.

During the lunch break, the father shared the story of how Liam had almost given up on his international career for him. Plunkett Sr had a genetic renal disorder and had to frequently undergo dialysis. One visit home, and the cricketer son couldn't see the father's suffering anymore. He got his tests done and the reports found him to be a perfect match, giving the good son the green signal to be his father's kidney donor.

The greatest game

2019 cricket World Cup final shows how sport enhances life, reconfirms the power of self-belief

This was 2007, he was just 22, and training hard to make an international comeback. However, the father's insistence and subsequent health improvement resulted in Liam pursuing his cricket dream. Had there been a minor twist to this tale, England wouldn't have had that unflustered big-stage bowler, who came with a scrambled-seam cutter to dismiss the New Zealand captain and Player of the Tournament Kane Williamson in the final.

When the English captain, Eoin Morgan, ended his country's long-wait to lift the Cup; watching the unadulterated and over-the-top revelry of the punch drunk English fans at Lord's, made you wonder if anyone ever could be happier. But then you thought of the elderly Yorkshire couple you met at Nottingham five years back.

Not as emotional as the Plunketts, New Zealand too has a young man with an exemplary and inspiring life story. In a downward spiral because of a soul-crushing injury and loss of form, New Zealand all-rounder Jimmy Neesham too had decided to quit the sport. Such was his disgust towards the sport he once deeply loved that he would wake on match days, peep out of the window hoping it had rained and the match would get called off. He even thought of settling as a salesman for a company that sold electric collars for cows. He didn't, he stuck around. Had he not, who would have come up with those "nailing yorkers" and "sailing sixes" in the final moments at Lord's. If not for him, the game wouldn't have been tied twice. It would have been just another close final, not the greatest cricket game ever played.

The biggest challenge for those taking this "greatest game" to the screen or stage will be the narrative's lack of intrigue, melodrama or histrionics. For starters, the two teams were led by men with angelic faces, the kind that make mothers, watching cricket at home, recoil when they see their favourite get hurt on field. Morgan and Williamson don't wear their aggression on their sleeve but it still is felt by the two batsmen on the pitch and also nine inside the dressing room.

They are strong and silent, and they stay the same regardless of the match situation. They don't put on a mask, or a game face, when entering the field. Williamson and Morgan aren't all smiles at 5/3 and get scowly at 320/4. Their qualities and concepts are elusive; they remain invisible to the untrained eye. Their actions and decisions drop a hint but the two are way too understated for anyone to read their minds.

For the in-your-face Indian squad that has now lost two semis and two finals at ICC events — 50-overs World Cup and T20 Championship — there are lessons to be learnt. Virat Kohli can learn the art of restrained aggression from Williamson and Morgan. Maybe, he can even give a thought about being more selective when it comes to the words he mouths in both delight and despair. The impressionable young cricketers might take years to perfect the Kohli cover drive, but reading the lips of the hero and repeating it on the cricket field wouldn't take time.

The England vs New Zealand final where no one choked or had a brain freeze — there were slip ups on both sides but no case of nerves — should act as a tutorial for the Indian cricketers. England and India chased virtually a similar total against the same bowling attack but the hosts came out shining.

A couple of batting failures here and there are part of cricket but a top-order collapse, a middle-order surrender and a faulty finish in the same game and that too a World Cup knock-out clash hints at a chronic nervous disorder. Champion sides know how to flirt with fine margins. They know how to walk the tight rope.

But when expectations of fans are unreasonable, tasteless television teasers compare lifting the silverware to drinking tea from cheap china and some ill-dressed movie star walks on the field to monetise the dream of billions that 2019 will be a sequel to 1983; you know that fear of failure came in the way of succeeding.

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HARISH WANKHEDE

AN UPPER CASTE GAZE

Its nuanced depiction notwithstanding, 'Article 15' shows Dalits as victims

MAINSTREAM CINEMA BRINGS to us a world of enchanting narratives in which heroes perform tasks that are often beyond the realm of the imaginable. However, films also reflect our social and cultural values. Hindi cinema's dominant language overtly endorses the moral outlook of the social elites while social groups, like Dalits and Adivasis, are often depicted in a stereotypical manner.

It has been argued that the Dalit representation in Hindi cinema reflects philanthropic upper caste sensitivities. Dalit characters are often shown as powerless (*Sujata* and *Sadgati*), wretched (*Paar* and *Bandit Queen*) and dependent upon the morality of the social elites (*Aarakshan* and *Lagaan*). However, in recent times, films like *Rajneeti*, *Guddu Rangela*, *Manjhi*, *Masaan*, *Newton* and *Sonchiriya* attempted to break such stereotypes. Dalits were now no longer just victims of caste atrocities, but complex characters. The recently released *Article 15* is a welcome addition to films that portray Dalit subjectivity in a nuanced manner.

In the film, the Dalit community lives under conditions of abject poverty, performs filthy jobs and faces daily violence and social ostracisation. The non-Dalit characters assert their social identities and work to preserve the feudal-Brahmanical order. *Article 15* does not shy away from depicting the realities of caste society. For example, the brutal gang rape and murder of two Dalit girls does not shock the civil society. The victims' parents are helpless against the insensitive local police. Expecting justice for the victim appears farfetched under

such conditions.

Ayan Ranjan, a newly appointed IPS officer, enters the scene to bring justice to the victims. He delivers justice not through an act of revenge but by performing his job sincerely. A privileged Brahmin male, educated in the Western world and unaware of rural India's brutal caste realities, Ranjan is disturbed by the way the feudal order dominates the social and modern state institutions.

For the first time in Hindi cinema, the narrative revolves around the Dalit caste question. The film also has four set of Dalit characters alongside the Brahmin hero. Varied social and political objectives are behind different fragments of these Dalit lives. However, in end, they remain subjects of the brutal feudal order. While the Brahmin hero emerges as ideal and messianic, his Dalit counterparts are depicted as broken, corrupt or pathological people.

The first set of the Dalit characters represent the Dalit masses. The two teenaged Dalit girls are raped, murdered and hanged by a tree because they refuse to obey the dictates of the feudal elites. Their parents are helpless victims, tortured by the police authorities. These horrifying pictures haunt the narrative.

The second set of characters is of social activists, Gaura and Nishad resembling the activist, Chandrashekhar Ravan). They remind us of the idealist leaders of the Dalit Panthers movement which shocked the political establishment with their militant activism in the mid-1970s. Their commitment to radical Ambedkarite ideas and distrust of social and political authorities is showcased impressively.

Two other important characters are Jatavji, the police inspector and Malti Ram, the apprentice female doctor at the government hospital. They are part of state institutions, with salaried jobs, but their social status is not changed much. Both function under upper-caste bosses and lack independent agency. They represent the neo-Dalit middle class that has achieved economic mobility due to the state's affirmative action policies. However, they have failed to engage with the daily struggles of their poor Dalit counterparts.

Article 15 also comments on Dalit political leadership. The Dalit leader allies with a right-wing Hindu party that advocates Brahmin-Dalit unity to win elections. This draws from politics in Uttar Pradesh, where, in 1995, the BSP entered into a political alliance with the BJP. In current times, Dalit leaders like Ram Vilas Paswan and Ramdas Athawale have become part of the BJP-led NDA alliance.

Portraying Dalit subjectivities in a nuanced manner is welcome. However, the reformism of the upper caste elites seems to dictate the actions of *Article 15*'s Dalit characters. They are burdened with sufferings, become part of radical militant outfits or get associated with corrupt political regimes. The Dalit character as an independent hero, who can battle criminal elements without fear, is yet to find a respectable space in mainstream Bollywood films. Dalits are monitored as subaltern subjects who need the upper caste saviour.

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JULY 16, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

DESAI RESIGNS

MORARJI DESAI'S 28-month-old government went out of office as the revolt mounted against him in the Janata Party. Desai handed over his resignation to the President at 6.30 pm. Sanjiva Reddy accepted the resignation and asked him to continue as a caretaker PM until a new government is formed. Significantly, Desai has not resigned from the leadership of the Janata Party in Parliament. He has staked his claim to form another government on the ground that, even if depleted in strength, the Janata Party continues to be the single-largest party in the Lok Sabha. As such, he must be invited to form another government.

RAJ NARAIN'S CLAIM

RAJ NARAIN, WHO has brought about the fall of the Morarji Desai government, has staked his claim to forming an alternative ministry. As leader of the newly-formed Janata Party (Secular), Raj Narain sent to President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy a communication spelling out his claim. Meanwhile, leaders who had resigned from the Janata Party during the last week held detailed discussions among themselves on how to mobilise enough support to substantiate its claim. Contact has already been established with certain other Opposition group including Indira Congress and Congress to explore the possibility of either forming a coalition or

seeking their support from outside.

COALITION INEVITABLE

A COALITION GOVERNMENT at the Centre has become inevitable. But a ticklish situation has arisen because Morarji Desai has resigned from prime ministership but not from the leadership of the Janata Parliamentary Party. This has not only dismayed most of the Janata MPs but has put the party in a quandary. Desai has staked his claim to form a new government. Constitutional experts — Fali S Nariman, former Solicitor-General is one of them — say that the President cannot invite Desai to form the government because he has resigned from the prime ministership.



Same old rent-seeking

Politicians yearn to lay hands on Karnataka’s public goods and natural assets, control its bureaucracy. The present political crisis is a reflection of this impulse



JANAKI NAIR

FOR THE FIRST time in many years, Karnataka may break with its long-established norm of having a state government that is not formed by the same party that holds office at the Centre. Many exemplary traditions forged in this state usually went unnoticed — until the “discovery of Karnataka” during the 2018 election. How far we have travelled from the exceptional leadership of a Devaraj Urs, arguably the most important non-communist Indian leader committed to land reforms and social welfare, or an Abdul Nazir (“Neer”/water) saab, who pioneered an exemplary water policy in the 1980s! Karnataka should also have been better known for its decentralisation of panchayati raj institutions and its reservations for women long before the nation picked up those leads. And it was none other than the current Speaker, K R Ramesh Kumar, who as health minister in 2017, attempted to tame the rapacious private health establishment in Karnataka.

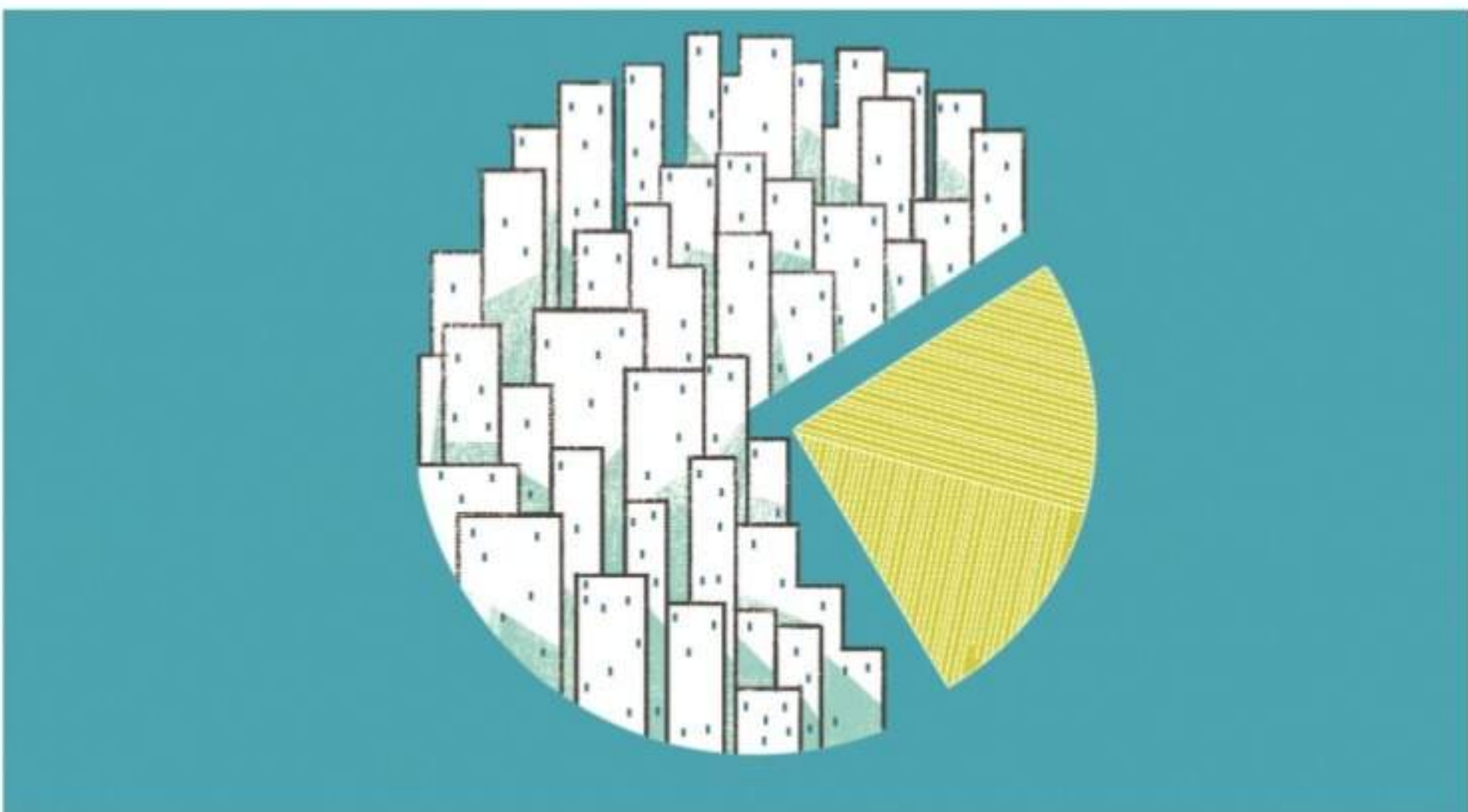
All these legacies have now been overshadowed by the spectacle of renegade JD(S) and Congress MLAs. As we watched them sprint down the corridors of Vidhana Soudha, exemplarily secured from public anger, desperate JD(S)/Congress “poachers”, the media, and assorted “threats” to their precious life and limbs, they looked nothing like the “rebels” they believe they are. So, what new political norms are being fashioned in Karnataka?

We are yet to establish whether the “green corridor” the renegades were ensured through the city of Bengaluru on the way from the HAL airport to the Vidhana Soudha — infuriating evening commuters — is a national first. Or is it A H Vishwanath, who has redefined hypocrisy, since he had once said, in his book *Mallige Maatu* published in 2014, that all justifications for “deserting the natal home and sheltering with the enemy” are like smokecreens of renegades looking for “fresh pastures to graze on”?

Of late, Karnataka politics, which has had a colourful “chicken-eating Brahmin” CM, has become better known for the chief minister who was jailed on corruption charges. Even the CM’s RSS background did not steel him from the fatal attractions of land and mining contracts. And the restless ambitions of the party he had forsaken in 2012 once more restored him to the place of chief manoeuvrer.

But he is not alone in his preoccupations. Even a cursory glance at the backgrounds and assets of the deserters provided in *The Indian Express* is revealing: Apart from Shivaram Hebbar, whose declared assets have mysteriously declined between 2013 and 2018, and A H Vishwanath, whose crores remained stable in the same period, most other legislators, such as B Ramalinga Reddy, Roshan Baig, Ramesh Jharkiholi, Anand Singh, S T Somasekhhar, Byrathi Basavaraj, N Munirathna, K Gopalaiah have massively upped their incomes. M T B Nagaraj has declared himself the richest real-estate-businessman-turned-politician with assets of a dizzying Rs 1,015 crore.

Forget agriculture, neither the IT/BT or the garment industries, for which Bengaluru may



Suvajit Dey

be better known, nor even the once lucrative education sectors are sending their representatives to the legislative bodies. The wealth of those legislators on the “run” is drawn from two important areas — strip mining and real estate. Neither of these are guaranteed to swell government coffers, offer jobs or bring well-being to the people of Karnataka. The catastrophic devastation of Bellary or Chitradurga, with possibly irreversible consequences for soil and water, is no longer discussed, though the 2011 Lokayukta report detailed the colossal loss to the exchequer, damage to the environment, and severely declining village welfare from illegal iron mining and forest encroachment in the Bellary area.

Bengaluru has been the honey pot for real estate interests since at least the 1980s, when the kith and kin of successive chief ministers quite unpatriotically declared “oore nam-madu” (this state/land is ours). Anthropologists such as Michael Goldmann have coined the term “speculative urbanism” to describe the “unnatural” market processes by which urban growth, particularly on the peripheries of the city, follows speculation, determining not only acquisitions and sales but also urban form.

This has not stopped the renegades from claiming they want to serve the people. Dismayed by the election of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in 1851, Karl Marx had insightfully suggested that we get beyond the deceptive “self-perceptions” of quarrelling political factions. Memorably, he noted: “Thus the Tories in England long imagined that they were enthusiastic about monarchy, the church, and the beauties of the old English Constitution, until the day of danger wrung from them the confession that they are enthusiastic only about *ground rent*.”

These individual biographies establish that politicians yearn to lay hands on the state’s public goods and natural assets, as well as control of its once independent bureaucracy. The result is often the disaster that the current resort/hotel politics completely eclipsed. It was the collapse of a building under construction in one of Bengaluru’s cosmopolitan areas, Pulakeshinagar (formerly Cox Town), which killed five people. It was a textbook case of the violations that are tolerated by civic inspectors, bureaucrats, and politicians — three floors built in the place of two, which led to the collapse of an adjoining

Forget agriculture, neither the IT/BT or the garment industries, for which Bengaluru may be better known, nor even the once lucrative education sectors are sending their representatives up to the legislative bodies. The wealth of those legislators on the ‘run’ is drawn from two important areas — strip mining and real estate. Neither of these are guaranteed to swell government coffers, offer jobs or bring well-being to the people of Karnataka. The catastrophic devastation of Bellary or Chitradurga, with possibly irreversible consequences for soil and water, is no longer discussed.

basement, and a domino effect which threatened a third building as well.

Bengaluru’s passage from a small town to a big metropolis was enabled by such illegalities, involving variously the state, builders, the middle-class and even the urban poor. In this building collapse, several destinies intersected: Poor construction labourers (including two from Bengal) in their search of a livelihood paid with their lives; some middle-class investors, though fully complicit in the illegalities, lost their homes; we are yet to see what will happen to the bureaucrats, civic officials and builders linked to the chain of illegalities.

But our legislator profile strongly suggests that as a class, builders and their partners in government will survive unscathed, with or without “divine intervention”. Inscribed on the auspiciously east facing entrance of the Vidhana Soudha are the words, “Government Work is God’s Work”. Karnataka’s legislators have breathed new life into those words. Worship is work: H D Revanna while at Chamundi claimed that the current government was divinely ordained. In non-theological terms, such pre-ordination refers to the desire for sovereign power.

During the Karnataka elections of 2018, then Karnataka chief minister, Siddaramaiah, refused the path that many, including his own party chief, had taken by their craven tours of temples and mathas. He had stressed instead the humanism of Basava’s message, a uniquely Karnataka heritage, that had spurned caste at its founding. Now he too is twinned with more earthly ambition.

It is too early to tell whether the hypernationalist “alternative” raised by the new kid on the block, Tejasvi Surya, will refocus Karnataka’s “unity” around the project of identifying second-class citizens. At this time, it is urgent to recall what Karnataka’s recent history has taught us: That perhaps only consensually agreed on *constraints* on certain economic “freedoms” (for example, unrestrained mining) and political practices (for instance, the penchant for unleashing a reign of terror rather than abiding by a rule of law) will enable a morally defensible social life, and ensure true freedom, equality, the flourishing of the human condition and what we owe to others, not least those generations to come.

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WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“China’s governance in Xinjiang is of great value to anti-terrorism and extremism, and it has been proven effective. This should be praised instead of being criticised.” — GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Maritime challenges and opportunities

The churn in the Persian Gulf provides India an opening to step up its strategic engagements beyond investments in the Chabahar port



RAJA MANDALA

BY C RAJA MOHAN

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN the Straits of Hormuz and Malacca help reveal India’s emerging challenges and opportunities on the maritime front. To the west of the country, international shipping is on high alert amidst the escalating tensions in the region between Iran and its neighbours on the one hand and between Tehran and Washington on the other. According to some estimates, at least 17 countries have been affected, either directly or indirectly, by the recent attacks on oil tankers in the Gulf region.

To the east, China has put its commercial shipping passing through the Straits of Malacca on a high alert. While the tensions in the Gulf centred around Iran are visible, the littoral states of the Malacca Straits are mystified at the Chinese decision to put its ships on alert. The three littoral states of the Malacca Straits — Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore — say they see no evidence of a real or potential threat.

Some believe that the Chinese decision might be based on intelligence about a local terror attack on its shipping. Others suspect this could be a prelude a larger move by China to establish a significant naval presence at the Malacca Straits that is seen as Beijing’s economic “life line”.

Every year, nearly \$500 billion worth of trade passes through the Straits of Hormuz. The value of commerce flowing through the Malacca Straits annually is estimated at more than \$3 trillion. Threats to the shipping in the straits of Hormuz and Malacca, however, are not new. What is new, though, is the US insistence that Asia pay for its energy security in the Gulf. In a tweet last month, President Donald Trump said Asian countries “should be protecting their own ships.”

The US has long been guarantor of maritime security in the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Trump is now questioning the costs and benefits of this historic American role. This is very similar to the US pressure on its European allies to contribute a greater share of the costs for the maintenance of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. That allies “free ride” on American shoulders has been at the heart of Trump’s world view. And he has been determined to ramp up the pressure against its partners in Europe and Asia to change the relative security burdens.

That the US is no longer dependent on oil imports from the Middle East and has be-

come a major hydrocarbon exporter, have created the new economic context for Trump’s questioning of traditional American commitments to the Gulf. On his part, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reportedly told Trump at their meeting in Osaka last month that he has ordered the Indian Navy into the Gulf to escort the Indian oil tankers.

Since the Osaka talks, the story has moved on. Senior US officials, including General Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have unveiled plans to build an international coalition to secure the Gulf. Japan and South Korea are reportedly considering participation in such a coalition.

While Tokyo and Seoul are ambivalent about incurring additional costs to secure their oil imports, Beijing might be better prepared — in terms of capabilities as well as ambitions — to take larger responsibility for security in the Gulf. A decade ago, when piracy threatened international shipping in the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea, China initiated naval deployments that have turned into a permanent military presence in the region.

Since then, China has set up its first foreign military base in Djibouti. Beijing has intensified its military engagement in the Gulf and the Arabian Sea littoral. The US’s demand that Asians do more for securing the flows of energy, provides China with an unprecedented opportunity to carve out a larger role for itself in the Gulf.

The opportunity should be equally attractive to India. After all, Delhi is closer to the Gulf than Beijing and is in a better position to raise its maritime profile in the littoral. It has big stakes in the Gulf as well as a longer tradition of providing security to the region. Meanwhile, the countries in the Gulf region are looking to diversify their security partnerships as an insurance against potential downsizing of American security commitments. But the public debate in Delhi is focused rather narrowly on the implications of the Gulf crisis for its planned investments in Iran’s Chabahar port and on finding ways to appear neutral.

One hopes that the Modi government is thinking a little more boldly about India’s strategic possibilities in the Gulf amidst a historic churn shaking up this oil-rich region and its relationship to the world. More broadly, as Asia rises and the US rethinks its role in providing public goods in the Indo-Pacific, Delhi must aim to do more for maritime security on its own as well as through coalitions of like-minded countries. After all, Modi has often suggested that India must aspire to become a “leading power” and take greater responsibility for regional security in India’s neighbourhood.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TAGORE’S WORDS

THIS REFERS TO E P Unny’s ‘Freeze Frame’ cartoon (IE, July 15). Rabindranath Tagore is shown as handcuffed. The way political atmosphere is currently changing in our country, this cartoon may become a reality before long. In *Bharat Teertha*, Tagore wrote: “O Aryans, non-Aryans, come here. O Hindus and Mussalmans, come here. You Englishmen, and Christians, come here. Come here, O Brahmins with a clean heart, and join hands with everyone. Come here all downtrodden, letting go of your past humiliations. Only by the combined touch of all of you, will this pot of water, meant for the ceremonial washing of the Motherland, become sacred.” In another instance, Tagore writes, “Leave this chanting and singing and telling of beads. Whom are you worshipping in this lonely dark corner of a temple, keeping all its doors shut? Open your eyes and see that your God is not present before you!” With the way we are now going, it is likely that Tagore will soon be censored.

Ranjan Das, Mumbai

ROTE ROUTE

THIS REFERS TO THE article, ‘The burden of perfect 10’ (IE, July 15). The writers have meticulously highlighted the all that ails our education system. From Macaulay’s thesis to the current trend, our education system seems to be static. The only variable is in the marks scored by the students. Diving into the numbers, one can easily locate many of the problems of our education system to this contradiction. Parents as well as the government need to emphasise conceptual learning rather than motivate students to

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

learn by rote.

Ankit singh, Prayagraj

CASTE HURDLE

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘The fundamental unity’ (IE, July 15). The idea of a “fundamental unity” of all life forms has indeed been the common heritage of many socio-religious philosophies, particularly in the East. But what the article misses is the fact that this unity cannot, as a part of the ideology of “integral humanism”, reinforce a process of social integration. To do this, it would have to defy the overarching paradigm of governance and society built on the caste system. **G Javid Rasool, Lucknow**



DIVYANSH DEV

AS THE JULY 31 deadline for the Supreme Court-monitored NRC (National Register of Citizens) in Assam approaches, the faultlines in the discourse around it have widened. Some of the descriptions of the exercise ignore how its history dates back a century, and how that history continues to mould the present. The basic issue of weeding out infiltrators and preserving racial and ethnic identity is being drowned by confused concerns over the rights of refugees and a religious exodus. These accusations are false: The NRC refuses to touch refugees and only filters the infiltrators that have secured access to the state’s resources purely as a vote-bank. Given the exercise is Supreme Court monitored — the Court is ultimate guarantor of fundamental rights — any misgivings about a Rohingya-like situation in Assam must be ignored.

The British devised the “Line System” in 1916 and implemented it in 1920 in Assam wherein the specified areas were demarcated for Muslim immigrants and indigenous people. The immigrants were not allowed to settle in areas belonging to indigenous people of Assam.

C S Mullan, Superintendent of the 1931 Census highlighted the impact of immigrants on indigenous people of Assam. He pointed out that such an influx is akin to eliminating the Assamese race and culture at a greater pace than Burmese invasion century years ago. According to him, immigrants had already conquered Nowgong district, Darrang

Healing old wounds

NRC process addresses a century-long demographic crisis in Assam

district and the Barpeta subdivisions were to be invaded. The immigration issue later formed the bedrock of the Pakistan movement in Assam. By 1937, Muslim League leaders propagated a theory that political power depended on population. This became even more prominent after the League’s 1940 Lahore resolution calling for the creation of Pakistan. Soon after, leaflets titled “Muslims of Assam, Unite” became rampant.

Lord Wavell, British Viceroy of India, during his 1943 visit to Assam said, “the chief political problem in Assam was the desire of the Muslim Ministers to increase the immigrant population into the uncultivated Government lands under the slogan of Grow More Food, but what they were really after was Grow More Muslims.” Further, a tripartite agreement between Government of Assam and the Muslim League in 1945 gave the former the rights to evict illegal immigrants who had migrated to the Assam province after 1938.

Assam bore the brunt of pre-Partition violence as well — Maulana Bashani (Muslim-League MLA from Dhubri South) called for immigrants to undertake jihad against the Congress-led Bordoloi government. A telegram from Bordoloi, the Premier of Assam, to Sardar Patel on March 19, 1947, read: “Assam situation serious, causing govt Great anxiety. Assam Muslim League and Bengali Muslim Leaders planning invasion of Assam by organised volunteers from

Bengal. Many immigrants Muslim entered in Assam... Clash inevitable as tension continues.” When the results of the referendum in Muslim-majority Sylhet District were in favour of joining East Pakistan, Assam found itself in a comfortable situation. Bordoloi told Patel on February 18, 1948, that giving the Bengali district of Sylhet and a portion of Cachar from Assam to East Pakistan is “a consummation to which the Assamese people are looking forward for the last 70 years”.

The Asom Jatiya Mahasabha, which led the Assamese cause, published a statement the following statement in *The Shillong Times* on August 27, 1947: “With Sylhet joining Pakistan, Assam has grown smaller in area but attained greater homogeneity which has prompted Assam to be free and sovereign.”

Soon after Independence, the Nehru-Liaquat Pact of 1951 protected the rights of minorities of both India and Pakistan. The immigrant Muslims who had left Assam for East Pakistan returned due to the pact. However, they were not part of the 1951 census and the Assam NRC that was prepared that year.

In the next decade, the pogrom in East Pakistan against the Bengalis led to an increase in migration. This peaked at the time of the liberation of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971. Then, as per the Indira Gandhi-Mujibur Rahman Pact of 1972, all refugees who entered India before March 25, 1971, were allowed to stay in India.

By 1979, the monumental increase in the

number of voters, 45,000 of whom were foreigners in a by-election in Assam, lead to birth of the Assam Movement. The movement demanded the deportation of foreigners and the deletion of their names from the electoral roll. The Assam Accord signed between the Rajiv Gandhi government and student leaders of Assam movement in 1985, says: “Foreigners who came to Assam on or after March 25, 1971, shall continue to be detected, deleted and practical steps shall be taken to expel such foreigners”.

The 2009 PIL in the Supreme Court filed by an Assamese NGO sought directions from the Court to delete the names of 41 lakh foreigners from the voters list on the pretext of Assam Accord and update the 1951 NRC accordingly. Since 2015, the process is court-monitored.

These 100 years, if anything, illustrate that Assam’s struggle isn’t new, and this exercise is not unfamiliar. The reasons behind NRC are same, as are the aspirations of the people whose will mandates it. Beyond the politics, polarisation and promises, for the first time, India is dissuading the nourishment of vote-banks at the expense of the state’s resources.

Dev is a practising advocate at Delhi High Court. He has been an Ambassador for Harvard University’s Oral History Project on Partition of British India. Views expressed are personal

